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Members of the Environment Committee

**Re: H.B. NO. 6637 (COMM) AN ACT REQUIRING AN INVASIVE SPECIES STAMP FOR THE OPERATION OF A MOTORBOAT ON THE INLAND WATERWAYS OF THE STATE**

**Testimony submitted by Joan A. Lewis, 48 Antrim Road, Coventry, CT  
Chairman, Coventry Town Council**

I am writing in strong support of HB 6637 and would like to thank the Committee and the sponsors of this Bill for presenting this very important legislation. Unfortunately, Hydrilla was discovered in Coventry Lake a few years ago. As we have a State boat ramp, we believe this is how this invasive plant was introduced to our lake. Hydrilla is an aquatic invasive species that will easily re-root and is both a perennial and an annual and poses a dangerous threat to Coventry Lake and other lakes in our state if not controlled. Treatments of Hydrilla in Coventry Lake during the summers of 2016 and 2017 failed. Preliminary results show that the treatment used in 2018 was more effective. These treatments are very expensive and pose a burden on our community. Each annual treatment consists of the initial treatment plus two follow up treatments. Coventry is looking at 6-10 years of treatment. The total cost of the 2018 treatment was \$123,000. Fortunately, a portion of last year's cost was offset by a grant from DEEP. Unfortunately, these funds are no longer available.

As I mentioned previously, Coventry has a state boat launch; so as long as Hydrilla is present in our lake, boaters using the launch or boat owners on the lake could transfer this invasive plant to other lakes and waterways in our State as well as other States in the area. It is extremely important that there be funding available to enable towns like Coventry to reduce the spread of Hydrilla and other invasive plants through effective treatment.

Costs to the State of Connecticut and to the individual municipalities will skyrocket if Hydrilla gains more of a foothold in our lakes and waterways. The proposed user-based \$5 boat registration fee is quite modest and will help a great deal, especially if it is directed to a dedicated fund and the majority of the money collected is used for prevention and control measures, cleanup grants and public education initiatives in regard to Hydrilla and other invasive species. Boats are the most common vector of aquatic invasive species. Connecticut's lakes are one of our most important assets; and I believe we must do everything we can to protect them.

Thank you very much for your time and for your consideration of this extremely important legislation to help preserve Connecticut's lakes and waterways.